



Media Release

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VBA grant funds creation of virtual reality training tool

The Victorian Building Authority (VBA) is investing in innovation that could mean builders and plumbers can one day use virtual reality (VR) to improve the quality of their work and increase consumer confidence.

Led by RMIT University's Professor Peter SP Wong and Professor Ron Wakefield, the VBA has funded a research grant for a proof of concept VR app that will focus on inspection scenarios targeting the risk of moisture ingress and water damage in Victorian buildings.

The VR app will provide practitioners and students with immersive, 4K resolution 360-degree pictures and videos of common building and plumbing inspection scenarios captured on construction sites. The VR app will allow users to self-assess and identify if their own work is at risk of non-compliance with regulatory requirements, in areas that are likely to lead to moisture ingress and water damage.

The VBA's State Building Surveyor Andrew Cialini said the regulator was supportive of innovative solutions to practitioner problems.

"It is important that non-compliance on construction sites can be easily identified so that it is fixed and does not impact consumers, this proposed technology is a new way to help both students and practitioners get a better understanding of what to look out for, and what compliant work looks like."

"Forty-four percent of Proactive Inspection Program (PIP) inspections conducted by the VBA in 2021-22 identified at least one non-compliance risk. Wet areas, water proofing and drainage issues are commonly occurring areas of non-compliance risk we identify through our proactive inspections," Mr Cialini said.

Professor Wong said he hoped the project would inform the development of training and education programs for building and plumbing practitioners and help them to become more vigilant and introspective.

"It is important to educate building and plumbing practitioners on how to self-assess their compliance with regulatory requirements. However, many existing training programs, courses or webinar sessions usually adopt a top-down approach."

The VBA's Research Grant Program supports researchers at Australian universities and TAFEs find innovative solutions to challenges in the Victorian building and plumbing sector.

This grant was awarded under the second round of research grants funded by the VBA, with grants awarded to RMIT University, Deakin University and the University of Tasmania in the inaugural round.

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